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Is Lancôme perceived as a co-creating brand in Germany and how can the brand leverage on brand value co-creation to engage with consumers?

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Abstract The purpose of this Work Project was to explore whether the high-end beauty brand Lancôme is perceived as a co-creating brand in Germany and how it can leverage on brand value co-creation to engage with its consumers. Two studies based on qualitative in-depth interviews with highly interested beauty consumers and with Lancôme managers from Germany were conducted. The research demonstrates that consumers and managers have a different perception of co-creation and that Lancôme is not perceived as a co-creating brand by German consumers. Thus, the insights of this Work Project may assist Lancôme managers in understanding how to engage with consumers by using co-creation.

Keywords: Co-creation; Brand value; Beauty Brands; Lancôme

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1. Introduction

"The meaning of value and the process of value creation are rapidly shifting from a product- and firm-centric view to personalized consumer experiences. Informed, networked, empowered, and active consumers are increasingly co-creating value with the firm" (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004b, p.6).

Co-creation is currently a hot topic in marketing literature and practice. Research has endorsed the importance of co-creation, especially due to the emergence of the empowered consumer and the shift from a company-centric to a customer-centric view. According to most scholars and practitioners, companies can no longer act as an internal oriented entity, developing products or creating marketing messages with little or no input from consumers (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a). Focusing on co-creation activities can therefore lead to new sources of competitive advantage (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004c). For the purpose of this Work Project co-creation is defined as "the practice of developing systems, products, or services through collaboration with customers, managers, employees, and other stakeholders" (Ramaswamy, 2011, p.195).

Several beauty brands in the high-end market have been starting to use co-creation activities. A recent success is the community-driven beauty brand *Glossier*, which is known for focusing on their social media community and is constantly integrating customer feedback for new product development or marketing campaigns (Bruner, 2016). Lancôme, a L'Oréal brand and one of the leaders in the high-end cosmetic industry, has also started to launch some co-creation activities, for instance at the point-of-sale, where consumers can create their own custom blended foundation. During my internship at Lancôme in Germany, I developed a strong knowledge of the brand and its current marketing activities. Lancôme has to keep pace with the rising trend of consumer empowerment in order to stay ahead in this fast changing industry, especially as direct-to-consumer brands like *Glossier* continue to grow. Therefore, studying the concept of co-creation in the context of high-end beauty brands is worthwhile.

The overall purpose of this study is to understand whether Lancôme is perceived as a co-creating brand in Germany and how the brand can leverage on brand value co-creation to engage with its consumers. Two studies have been conducted, one with beauty consumers and one with managers, using a qualitative methodology. The Work Project starts with the contextual background and then addresses the Work Project objectives.

2. Contextual Background

This section presents the theoretical background for the Work Project by starting with the key theories of co-creation, followed by brand value co-creation. Subsequently, the beauty market in Germany and the brand Lancôme is presented.

2.1 Co-creation

Co-creation has gained increased attention as a concept in marketing literature and practice over the last years. For the purpose of this Work Project, co-creation is defined as "the practice of developing systems, products, or services through collaboration with customers, managers, employees, and other stakeholders" (Ramaswamy, 2011, p.195). Three key theories have emerged to be central to this concept: Service-dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), value co-creation (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a;b;c) and service logic (Grönroos, 2008;2012).

The service-dominant (SD) logic of marketing looks at the process of value creation differently than the traditional goods-dominant approach used over the 20th century (Vargo & Lusch, 2012). In the traditional goods-dominant approach companies produce products and customers buy them. Within the SD logic, customers engage in a dialogue with companies during product or service design, production, delivery or consumption. Therefore, one of Vargo and Lusch's (2004) central premise is that the customer is always a co-creator of value. Vargo and Lusch (2006; 2016) differentiate between two main meanings of value: value-in-exchange and value-in-use. With value-in-exchange, value is created by a company and mainly realized through exchange of goods or services for money. However, with value-in-use, value is created only when the customer makes use of the goods or services. Therefore, Vargo and Lusch (2006) argue that the customer always defines value through perceived value-in-use and thus value in the SD logic is defined as the result of a combined activity between the customer and the company "but is always determined by the customer" (Vargo & Lusch, 2006, p. 44).

Another central concept in the co-creation literature is the value co-creation approach (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a; b; c). Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a) argue that due to the emergence of the connected, informed, active and empowered consumer, a company cannot create value without consumers` engagement. Thus, consumers should be seen as co-creators in the value creation process and not only as recipients of offerings (Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2016). The researchers argue that value for the consumer arises from a personalized, unique experience and for the company from enhanced market performance. Therefore, value co-creation occurs at points of interaction between consumers and companies. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004b) distinguish between the approach of co-creation of experience and co-creation of value. Co-creation of experience means that the consumer is engaged with the company, however the engagement is company-driven and focuses on connecting the customer to the company's offerings (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a). On the other hand, co-creation of value occurs when consumers and companies engage in a reciprocal dialogue to create value for both parties (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004c).

Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004c) describe the various stages of the evolution of a company in co-creation. The first stage is called *no focus* and assumes that a company is not able to actively influence consumers' expectations. This is followed by the *reactive* stage in which a company has learned to react to the expressed needs of consumers, for instance to problems articulated by the consumer. In the third stage a company becomes *responsive* and does not only react to consumer feedback, but also shows its concern through voluntary actions for consumer satisfaction. However, in the *reactive* and *responsive* stage, actions are still entirely company-driven. The fourth stage is *anticipatory*, where a company tries to anticipate customer needs. This is followed by the *shaping* stage, where a company educates current and potential consumers as to what products or services could be like. The final stage is *co-shaping* expectations, which is not just about the traditional one-way forms of business communication such as press releases or advertising, but about engaging consumers in a dialogue. This stage is about being open not only to educate customers but to be educated by them as well (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004c).

Another concept of co-creation is the service logic (Grönroos, 2008; 2011; 2013). Grönroos (2011) argues that consumers create value for themselves out of the support provided by companies. According to Grönroos, value co-creation is defined as the joint actions by a consumer and a company with the aim to contribute to the value that arises for one or both sides. Grönroos emphasizes that value co-creation only occurs when there is direct and personal interaction between the co-creating parties. Otherwise, the company acts only as a value facilitator and not as a co-creator of value as value is solely created by the customer (Grönroos, 2008).

2.2 Brand value co-creation

The increasing amount of research on value co-creation has allowed researchers to focus on brand value co-creation, a concept rooted in value co-creation (Payne, Storbacka, Frow, & Know, 2009; Merz, He, & Vargo, 2009; Hatch & Schultz, 2010). Brand value is defined as the value that is exclusively associated to the brand (Merz et al., 2009). In line with the service-dominant logic, Merz et al. (2009) claim that as value is in general co-created by various stakeholders, brand value is also co-created by various stakeholders (Merz et al., 2009). The researchers further argue that brand value takes stakeholders perceived brand value-in-use into account. Therefore, Merz, Zarantonello and Grappi (2018) define brand value co-creation as "the process of creating perceived use value for a brand through network relationships and social interactions among the ecosystem of all actors" (Merz et al., 2018, p. 79). According to Ramaswamy and Ozcan (2016), the brand's perceived value-in-use is enhanced by consumers' co-creation activities as this makes for instance the brand experience distinctive to other brands.

Merz et al. (2018) investigate how customers can contribute in the brand value co-creation process by exploring different dimensions. They argue that the customers' ability and their motivation to co-create are the key drivers for brand value co-creation. Customers' ability refers to the customers' "voluntary resource contribution to a firm's brand building activities" (Merz et al., 2018, p. 81). According to Merz et al. (2018), this dimension consists of brand knowledge, brand skills, brand creativity and brand connectedness.

Brand knowledge is defined as the customers' knowledge about the brand (Harmeling, Moffret, Arnold & Carlson, 2017) and can help brand management with marketing communication by improving the relevance and quality of content such as writing blogs or reviews (Payne et al., 2009).

Merz et al. (2018) argue that brand skills reflect the degree to which stakeholders are encouraged by the brand to use their capabilities. According to Harmeling et al. (2017), the extent to which a customer can influence other customers is a valuable resource for a company. The central idea is that a recommendation from a customer is more important, more trusted and more authentic than from marketers or salespersons.

Brand creativity is about how customers can help with the creation or development of ideas or about finding solutions to problems. This could provide brand management with unique insights into marketing functions such as brand usage or help advance consumer-generated content.

Brand connectedness represents the interpersonal ties of a customer within his social network. This can help brand management to broaden or diversify the audience and help them to access influential individuals or subgroups like brand communities (Merz et al., 2018).

According to Merz et al. (2018), the second dimension for brand value co-creation is customer motivation, which consists of brand passion, brand trust and brand commitment.

Brand passion represents a customers' strongly positive feeling towards a brand and is the foundation of all strong brand relationships. Brand management can leverage on that through positive word-of-mouth and the fact that brand enthusiasts are more likely to participate in co-creation activities (Muñiz & Schau, 2005).

Brand trust is seen as a key element of any customer relationship and represents the tendency of a customer to believe that a brand keeps its promises. According to Fueller, Matzler and Hoppe (2008), companies can integrate stakeholders who trust their brand into the process of brand value creation and thereby enhance their willingness to co-create.

Brand commitment shows the degree to which stakeholders are willing to cooperate with the brand. Merz et al. (2018) argue that committed stakeholders co-create brand value by taking over more committed roles in developing new products or participating more actively in brand communities.

2.3 The Beauty Market in Germany

With a market volume exceeding 13.6 million euros in 2016, Germany is Europe's largest beauty market (Statista, 2017). The beauty industry is a highly fragmented market, which is composed of various product categories such as face skincare, make-up, fragrances, haircare or hygiene products. The beauty market can be further divided based on the different distribution channels: mass-market channels (supermarkets and hypermarkets - mass market products), selective distribution channels (perfumeries – premium, luxury, high-end products) and health care channels (pharmaceutical cosmetics). In Germany, especially the selective market has seen a constant growth in the last few years, which is driven by the expansion of the high-income class and the fact that German consumers increasingly value high quality cosmetics (L'Oréal Annual Report, 2017). Face skincare is the largest product category with a share of 37% in

Germany. However, make-up is the most dynamic category with a growth of 8.4% annually for the period 2016 to 2017 in Germany. This trend is largely due to the growing importance of "influence" mediated by YouTube, Instagram or Facebook (Deloitte, 2017).

The beauty market is currently driven by some major trends. First, millennials, born between 1980 and 2000, are projected to represent 30% of total retail sales by 2020. Therefore, many beauty brands focus on targeting younger consumers (Deloitte, 2017). Second, the growing importance of digital channels has changed the beauty market enormously. Although online sales still account for only around 8% of the total beauty market in 2017 (Statista, 2018), the effect of online influence is significant. Social Media has become one of the most important sources of information to consumers, especially for millennials where 68% of purchases are digitally influenced (Deloitte, 2017). In contrast, beauty advisors – cosmetic and skin care salespersons who offer personalized customer service in-store (L'Oréal Career Website, 2018) - are becoming less influential. Online opinion sharing, rates and reviews or beauty influencers are gaining increasing importance (Deloitte, 2017). A beauty influencer, defined as a type of third-party endorser, shapes the attitudes of an audience by writing blogs, creating online videos about beauty related topics or by cooperating with beauty brands (Freberg, Freberg, Graham & McGaughey, 2010). This type of consumer-generated content is perceived as more authentic and often more desirable by other consumers when compared to content created by marketers (Bickart & Schindler, 2001). As a result, the shift from pure brand power to online influencer power has encouraged more brand switching. Another trend shaping the beauty market is the rise of direct-to-consumer and niche beauty brands such as *Glossier* or *Drunk Elephant.* These brands communicate directly with consumers through social media instead of using traditional marketing methods and as millennials rely heavily on word-of-mouth and online reviews, that kind of online visibility is important. The success of these brands is driven by having a community-focused approach and by their speed and agility to respond to consumer feedback.

For instance, *Glossier* launched its best-selling *Milky Jelly Cleanser* after asking consumers on Instagram to “describe the face wash of their dreams” (BoF, 2017).

In Germany, L’Oréal is the beauty market leader with a market share of 11.3% in 2016 (Euromonitor, 2017). The company has a very diversified portfolio with 32 international brands that cover all the lines of cosmetics from skin care, hair care, make-up and perfume. The portfolio is divided by the L’Oréal Group in four different divisions based on the different distribution channels: Consumer Products Division (mass market), Professional Products Division (hair salons), Active Cosmetics Division (pharmacies) and L’Oréal Luxe (premium/luxury distribution) (L’Oréal Corporate Website, 2018).

2.4 The high-end beauty brand Lancôme

Lancôme is a French high-end beauty brand that was originally founded as a fragrance house by Armand Petitjean in 1935. The brand was acquired by L’Oréal in 1964. It has become one of the most successful international brands of the L’Oréal Luxe Division being present in more than 130 countries with sales in 2017 of approximately $4.7 billion (Forbes: World’s Most Valuable Brands, 2017). Lancôme has become the number 2 brand in the women’s selective cosmetics market in Germany by offering fragrances, skincare and make-up. Some of the brands iconic products are the perfumes *La vie est belle* and *Trésor*, the mascara *Hypnôse* and the face skincare serum *Génifique.* The products are distributed through department stores, perfumeries, multi-brand premium stores (e.g. Sephora), online retailers and the Lancôme online shop. Lancôme products combine scientific expertise and concentrated innovation with the aim to offer every woman the possibility to enhance her beauty and femininity no matter her age or skin color. The brand embodies the quintessence of happiness, ultra-femininity as well as French elegance and excellence, which is expressed through the brand’s symbol of a single rose. Lancôme’s international ambassadresses are Julia Roberts, Penélope Cruz, Kate

Winslet, Lupita Nyong'o and Isabella Rossellini, chosen for their beauty, charisma and intelligence.

Lancôme is a complex brand due to the fact that it offers all the three lines of skincare, fragrance and make-up for women of every age. In the last couple of years, Lancôme tried to rejuvenate the brand by targeting millennials. Therefore, Lancôme introduced new products like the mascara *Monsieur Big* and used more edgy communication. However, the brand experienced some difficulties as Lancôme focused too much on millennials with their communication and therefore lost some of their main customers, the middle-aged women. Lancôme then realized that the brand should not get "younger" but try to be more "modern". This objective was operationalized by choosing international brand ambassadresses such as Taylor Hill, Lilly Collins or the influencer Chiara Ferragni, who are supposed to bring Lancôme on millennials' mind but at the same time express the brand's values. Moreover, in order to become an approachable luxury brand and to engage a broader audience, Lancôme launched *"Declaring Happiness"* as the new brand message in 2017. Furthermore, each country introduced local ambassadresses to spread the new message and become more approachable (L'Oréal Corporate Website, 2018)

As Lancôme is part of the L' Oréal Group, the brand uses the company-wide "consumer-centric" approach. The idea is to make all decisions with the customer in mind in order to meet the individual needs (Shah et al., 2006). The introduction of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Program in 2017 or the *path-to-purchase* framework are central elements of the consumer-centric approach at Lancôme in Germany. The *path-to-purchase* (Appendix 1) is used for every new product launch to understand how consumers buy beauty products and how to advertise to them (Incite, 2013).

3. Addressing the Work Project Objectives

This chapter addresses the Work Project objectives. It starts with a description of the research design, followed by the two studies conducted and a presentation of the main insights.

3.1 Research design

In order to explore whether Lancôme is perceived as a co-creating brand in Germany, a qualitative method was developed. Two separate studies were conducted, one with consumers that exhibited a high interest in beauty and one with Lancôme managers. The qualitative method was suitable as the sample size of the managers was too small for a quantitative method. The objective of the studies was to obtain a deeper understanding of consumers and managers opinions about co-creation. Therefore, a quantitative method would not have been adequate as it focuses on quantification and testing hypothesis (Brand Management Course, 2018).

3.2 Study 1

The objective of Study 1 was to explore and understand how consumers with a high interest in beauty currently engage with beauty brands. It provided insights on what it means for consumers to engage with beauty brands and why they choose or do not choose to engage with Lancôme in particular. Furthermore, this study provided some insights on the purchase and consumption behavior of these consumers.

3.2.1 Methodology

For this study, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted. This method was chosen as it is considered as one of the most appropriate research tools for exploratory research. It helps to discover underlying motives and patterns that would otherwise not be noticed in more standardized tools. The interviews conducted were semi-structured, meaning that there was one introductory question as a starting point, followed by a list of pre-defined topics to be explored during the interviews. The interview guide can be found in Appendix 3. According to Gillham (2005), this structure allows the researcher a certain degree of flexibility to adapt to the information provided during the interviews. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in German and were recorded digitally for later analysis. For the interpretation of the interviews, a content analysis was utilized by choosing significant quotes and categorizing these into topics.

3.2.2 Participants

The aim for this study was to interview 30 consumers with a high affinity for beauty. A total of 39 consumers were asked to fill out a pre-recruiting questionnaire, either via Facebook or in-person. The pre-recruiting questionnaire (Appendix 2) was based on a set of filters to ensure that consumers exhibited a high interest in beauty, as one assumption was that these consumers were more likely to engage with beauty brands. Therefore, participants had to have purchased a beauty product for personal use in the last six months and consider themselves highly interested in beauty. For the later categorization, participants had to specify their past or current interactions with beauty brands and name at least three brands they had these interactions with. From my internship at Lancôme, I could derive the exploratory assumption that most consumers do not see Lancôme as a co-creating brand. In accordance with my advisor, I decided to interview beauty consumers interacting with different kinds of beauty brands as I was afraid about not finding enough consumers with interactions with Lancôme. As a result, the final sample for this study consisted of 30 consumers, all female with ages ranging between 19 and 31 (M= 25.1; SD=2.2). The majority of the participants were German, with one participant from Spain, one from Luxembourg and one from Russia. However, these participants were either born in Germany or had lived there for at least 5 years. The sample was diverse in terms of professional areas (e.g., Consulting, Education or Economics) and consisted of 14 Lancôme consumers. The most popular brand of the interviewees was Mac, followed by Benefit and Bobbi Brown.

3.2.3 Main Insights

The purpose of the interviews was to explore how and when consumers with high interest in beauty engage with beauty brands and how they perceive this engagement. This section starts with a short description of a) consumers' purchase and consumption behavior in order to better understand consumers' engagements. Based on the interviews, different types of engagement with beauty brands could be identified: b) direct engagements and c) indirect engagements. Finally, d) the perception of Lancôme in Germany as a co-creating brand is described.

a) Purchase and consumption behavior towards beauty brands

The majority of the interviewees can be considered as heavy users of beauty products as they buy more than three types of products per month. All of the interviewees prefer to buy beauty products in stores as it is very important for them to smell or test the products in advance. Furthermore, the advice of beauty advisors in store seems not important at all as in most cases the consumers have the feeling that they know more about the products than the beauty advisor. The interviewees only consider buying products online for repurchases.

Another interesting insight of the interviews was that none of the interviewees is loyal to one brand. Depending on the product category, consumers seem to have a strong preference for some brands, for instance Mac for lipsticks or Benefit for eyebrow products, because they are seen as "experts" in that category by the interviewees. However, if the interviewees have found a product that works for their individual needs, the majority stay with the product until their needs change or they are not satisfied any longer. Moreover, the interviewees enjoy combining products from various brands including mass market brands, high-end brands and niche brands.

b) Direct Engagements with Beauty brands

The interviews demonstrated that consumers engage directly with a beauty brand either because they were not satisfied with the brand or product they had historically been using or because they really loved the brand or product. A frequent reason of consumers' dissatisfaction was the fact that the brand discontinued one of their favorite products. In these cases, i) the particular product was used for at least one year, ii) it seemed to be very important for the consumer and iii) she had the feeling that she cannot live without it. Another frequent reason for dissatisfaction was that the formula of one of the consumer's favorite products was changed and the consumer was no longer pleased with the end result.

"The Bobbi Brown concealer was truly the best. [...] The new concealer is just not the same and I still haven't found a perfect replacement. That's why I wrote Bobbi Brown an e-mail to let them know that I am not happy with the new one" (24, Lancôme, Benefit, Bobbi Brown).[1]

In these cases of dissatisfaction consumers contacted the brand directly either via e-mail or via social media. Social Media was preferred because consumers felt it was easier than looking up the brand's e-mail address. In all cases, except for one, the brands answered directly. E-mails were either very standardized by customer service or more personalized, where the brand really addressed the specific problem. In one case, an interviewee contacted Rituals via e-mail, because she wanted to repurchase a body lotion that was no longer available as it was a limited edition. After several weeks, she received an e-mail stating that the limited edition body lotion would be back due to high consumer demand.

"I really felt valued and I even like Rituals more now. It seems like a human brand where consumers' opinion matters" (24, Clinique, Clarins, Rituals).

Feeling valued was most important to all the interviewees who contacted the brand. The consumers who mentioned that they were unsatisfied but did not decide to actively engage with the brand said that this would be either "*too much effort*" or they did not think that their feedback would matter and be valued by the brand. This was especially the case for high-end brands.

"I don't think my opinion would make a difference. Why would Dior change their product only because I am not happy with it anymore? (22, Dior, YSL, Lancôme).

Another reason why consumers engaged directly was because they were a huge fan of a brand or a specific product. In these cases, the interviewees engaged primarily via social media or participated in events or workshops of a specific brand. In social media, interviewees commented or shared posts of beauty brands or they contacted the brands to ask for advice. These interviewees enjoyed the "community feeling" they had while engaging.

"I am a fan of SkinCeuticals products. Sometimes I am not sure how I can combine them and therefore contact the brand on Instagram. Just recently I send a direct message and asked if I could combine this serum with my current skincare routine I love this easy way to exchange skincare tips" (27, Vichy, SkinCeuticals, Maybelline).

[1] Quotes are presented by indicating the interviewees' age and brands used

Participating in events or workshops seemed to be one of the most relevant interactions with beauty brands. The interviewees liked these kinds of interactions because it was *"a nice experience"* and they saw how their engagement mattered to the brands. Within the yearly Beauty Week in Munich, some interviewees participated in a workshop of the high-end beauty brand Bobbi Brown. They tested new products and participated in a crowdsourcing activity to brainstorm with other Bobbi Brown fans about new trends and shades for lipsticks.

"It was a really cool event. You had to apply for it in advance and say why you're a Bobbi Brown fan. During the workshop, I felt like a beauty influencer because the managers were really interested what we were thinking about certain trends or new products" (27, Chanel, Dior, Bobbi Brown).

c) Indirect Engagements with Beauty brands

Based on the interviews, it became obvious that all the interviewees had regularly indirect engagements with beauty brands such as i) giving feedback to beauty advisors or ii) engaging with beauty influencers. Giving feedback to beauty advisors seemed to happen naturally, for instance when a beauty advisor gave product advice.

"I have really sensitive skin [...] I specifically asked for advice. The pharmacist strongly recommended the product. But after testing it for three weeks, I went back because the promised result did not occur" (27, Vichy, SkinCeuticals, Maybelline).

Other interviewees engaged indirectly with beauty brands via a beauty influencer on either Instagram or YouTube. The main driver for consumers to engage with influencers seemed to be that they are really interested in beauty and want to belong and engage with a community that is as passionate about beauty as they are. For these consumers, the interactions were mainly about sharing opinions about products with other beauty interested people.

"It's not necessarily about the brand, but about the product. I like to know what others think about specific products and share my opinion with them." (31, Too faced, Benefit, Nyx)

Lastly, some interviewees said that they prefer to engage with brands in a passive way by only liking a post. For these consumers, actively engaging with a brand or influencer seemed to be too much effort or they do not see how their contribution would be valued by the brand.

"I don't see the meaning in engaging with a brand or an influencer. I don't think that my opinion will matter that much. If I want to talk about certain brands or products, I'll do it with my friends" (25, Mac, Origins, Maybelline).

d) Perception of Lancôme in Germany as a co-creating brand

The interviewees perceived Lancôme in Germany either as their *"mothers"* brand or associated it mainly with Julia Roberts. Half of the interviewees knew Lancôme from their mother and started using the products for that reason. These consumers perceived Lancôme as a more mature brand with good quality products, however they did not perceive the brand as very *"trendy"* or *"cool"*.

"Lancôme for me is the brand of my mother. I use the Hypnôse mascara and it's my favorite. However, I think I would never go to an event of Lancôme as I would expect older women like my mum there. I would rather prefer to go to an event of Bobbi Brown or YSL, because I imagine these to be more fun and cool with people at my age" (23, Lancôme, Armani, Bobbi Brown).

Other interviewees associated Lancôme with Julia Roberts and the perfume *La vie est belle.*

"When I hear Lancôme, I think instantly of Julia Roberts and her smile. I like her, but I can't identify myself with her" (26, Lancôme, Kiehl's, Chloé).

These interviewees mentioned that they only saw advertising of Lancôme with Julia Roberts for *La vie est belle*. They could not remember other communication campaigns, which shows that these campaigns lack visibility for the German consumers. The majority of the interviewed consumers had never seen advertising of Lancôme on social media before. Moreover, these interviewees mentioned that the communication with Julia Roberts did not motivate them to interact with Lancôme because they could not identify with her. Based on the ads they had seen, they were not even sure if Lancôme wants to engage with consumers or if it would be valued.

The interviewees seem to be very satisfied with their Lancôme products, repurchase them on a regular basis and are loyal to these products. These "love products" are noticeably often the *Hypnôse* mascara or the perfume *La vie est belle.* Some interviewees noticed that Lancôme starts offering *"cooler products like the lipstick you can shake"*. However, this does not seem to be transmitted through the communication. Some interviewees described the communication as *"boring", "distant"* or that *"they only use celebrities with which I don't want to engage with"*. Therefore, the current Lancôme communication seems not to motivate the interviewees enough to engage with the brand. However, some interviewees noticed that

Lancôme is starting to be more modern and younger as they see more influencers cooperating with Lancôme on Instagram or YouTube.

"I saw this morning that Amelia Liana received a Lipstick Box from Lancôme. Generally, I noticed that Lancôme started to work more with influencers. I think only because of that people get aware of the brand now. I only look for new trends or products on Instagram, so if a brand is not on Instagram I don't notice or engage with it" (24, Dior, Lancôme, Bobbi Brown).

The majority of the interviewees stated that they use mainly Instagram when engaging with brands. However, Lancôme in Germany does not currently have a local Instagram account, which can be another reason why the interviewees do not consider engaging with the brand. Engaging with the international Lancôme account in English does not seem to be of interest or represents a higher barrier for the interviewees.

3.3 Study 2

The objective for study 2 was to explore Lancôme's current co-creation activities and to understand how Lancôme managers perceive these co-creation activities. This provided further insights for addressing the question whether Lancôme can be considered a co-creating brand.

3.3.1 Methodology

For study 2, seven in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with Lancôme managers. The same method described in Study 1 was used. The interview guide can be found in Appendix 4. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and took place at the headquarters of Lancôme in Germany, with the exception of two interviews, which were conducted via Skype. The interviews were conducted in the manager's mother tongue of German, so no relevant information could be misinterpreted. Interviews were recorded digitally for later analysis.

3.3.2 Participants

The interviewed managers work at the L'Oréal headquarters in Düsseldorf, Germany and have all worked for the brand Lancôme for at least two years. The responsibilities of the individual managers range from Public Relations Director, Business Leader, Product Manager, Key Account Manager E-Commerce, Digital Manager and CRM and Community Manager.

The position of the Business Leader, who reports directly to the General Manager of Lancôme Germany, was only introduced in 2017 in order to simplify the decision-making processes. The Public Relations Director joined Lancôme 20 years ago and thus is the one with the longest experience with the brand, followed by the Business Leader and the Key Account Manager E-Commerce both with over 5 years' experience with the brand. The other managers have between 2 and 4 years of experience with Lancôme. The Key Account Manager E-Commerce was the only one who also worked for the international headquarters of Lancôme in Paris and thus could provide further insights on the overall strategy of the brand.

3.3.3 Main Insights

The interviews with the Lancôme managers provided an overview of a) Lancôme's co-creation activities and b) managers perceptions of these activities. It is important to note that the co-creation activities described here are mainly integrating stakeholders in communication campaigns and not in new product development or innovation processes as this occurs only at the international headquarters in Paris.

a) Lancôme's current co-creation activities

The current co-creation activities of Lancôme can be divided into activities with i) end consumers and ii) other stakeholders like beauty advisors or influencers. Co-creation activities with end consumers are mainly about taking consumer feedback into account. One example is the new communication campaign for the skincare serum *Génifique*. In the past, Lancôme often received the feedback from German consumers that the brand's communication is *"very arrogant"* and *"distant"* and that they only use *"international models or celebrities"*. According to the Lancôme managers in Germany, they take consumer feedback very serious and therefore started to launch campaigns with adaptions to the local market. Thus, for the launch of the new *Génifique* serum, a local "Rates & Reviews" campaign was used. Instead of showing models or celebrities, authentic reviews from German consumers were taken from the

German Lancôme website. This way the communication is much *"more approachable, more trustworthy and more tangible"* because local consumers can better relate.

"We used the "Rates & Reviews" campaign based on German consumer feedback. We realized that with our previous communication we couldn't reach them" (Business Leader).

Currently, Lancôme in Germany only has a local Facebook and YouTube account. For Instagram, there is only one official Lancôme account, which is managed by the international headquarters in Paris. According to the Lancôme managers, the local YouTube channel is primarily for awareness and Facebook for interaction with German consumers. However, the CRM and Community Manager said that a local Instagram account would be *"very beneficial to engage more with consumers, especially for make-up, as the community for make-up is mainly active on Instagram."* The Community Manager is responsible for managing feedback by responding to posts, collecting feedback and telling the Business Leader if a problem is mentioned frequently. The Lancôme managers believe that Facebook is the platform where the Lancôme community in Germany engages the most and leaves their feedback, both positive and negative. Having a local Facebook account is very important as the Community Manager can thus follow what the community is saying about Lancôme and its products.

"I recently posted a competition to participate in a product test. Many people commented that this was a fake and that there was no product test, but that Lancôme only wants to collect people's data. I realized that consumers need more transparency. Therefore, for the next campaign I wrote more information about the product test in the post and not only in the conditions of participation. I also did a post about the winner, so that other consumers could see that it is not a fake and to fight against the community's' misbeliefs" (CRM & Community Manager).

This example shows how Lancôme learns with consumers' feedback and adapts its digital campaigns. Another way Lancôme gathers consumer feedback is through beauty advisors. According to the managers, it is very important as the beauty advisors receive direct feedback from the consumers and can observe consumer purchase habits.

"The beauty advisor is in constant dialogue with the consumer and can tell us what works best, what kind of problems consumers are facing with products, which gift-with-purchases work best and so on" (Product Manager Make-up).

This feedback is then incorporated into new campaigns or new product orders for the next season. The feedback is gathered through Lancôme's district managers, who visit the different

Lancôme counters in Germany on a regular basis. However, the managers acknowledged that the feedback is not collected in a systematic way and often gets lost if the feedback was believed not relevant.

Lancôme's most recent co-creation activity with influencers was to build three "influencer squads" for each line (skincare, make-up, fragrance) consisting of two micro-influencers respectively. According to the PR Director, micro-influencers are those influencers who have between 1,000 and 50,000 followers compared to "Insta-celebs" with over a million of followers. The Lancôme managers have noticed that the smaller community of these micro-influencers is more dedicated and actively interacts with the influencer as they seem to be more trustworthy, authentic and approachable.

"Especially for skincare we chose micro-influencers on purpose, because skincare is about trust and the influencers need a background that enables them to write about skincare in a competent way. Insta-celebs are good and necessary for creating awareness, but with micro-influencers you have a better engagement rate which may raise the ROI of a campaign and lower the overall marketing spending" (PR Director).

Moreover, the influencers give their feedback, for instance when the product managers have to decide which new products to launch for the German market. This helps the product managers as the micro-influencers are experts in their specific area and know the needs of their communities. Furthermore, Lancôme learns what kind of campaigns work through the feedback of influencers. One of the micro-influencers once had a campaign, showing only Lancôme products. She received a lot of negative feedback from her community doubting the authenticity of her product recommendations. She reported the feedback to Lancôme and they decided together that "one brand only" campaigns do not work and that it is better to mix products from different brands for the following campaigns.

b) Managers perception of co-creation activities

It can be inferred from the interviews with the Lancôme managers that their perception of the brands current co-creation activities is divided. For the older or more experienced managers, Lancôme is already very advanced in its co-creation activities and thus in one of the final stages of co-creation. This perception may be due to the fact that these managers have worked for Lancôme more than 5 years and therefore see these differences over their career time frame. These managers were those who emphasized the consumer-centric approach a great deal.

"We take consumer feedback very seriously, because we now know that consumers perceptions are extremely relevant for our success. This has changed a lot compared to some years ago where consumer centricity and consumer feedback was not important for our daily work" (Business Leader).

However, this perception seems to be a little different for the younger or less experienced managers, who have been working for Lancôme for approximately two years. These managers recognize that Lancôme just started to realize how co-creation can be used and what benefits are derived from listening to consumer feedback. Furthermore, they acknowledge that the consumer-centric approach is growing as an important area and the way they include consumer insights or feedback has changed significantly. However, the CRM and Community Manager conclude that Lancôme is still in one of the first phases of co-creation. This becomes especially obvious when comparing Lancôme to the likes of *Glossier*, which is a community-driven beauty brand and demonstrates "Best Practice" of how to include and react to consumer feedback.

"Lancôme has still a long way to go concerning co-creation. At the moment, I would say that we only act in a reactive way on consumer feedback instead of approaching consumers in a proactive way" (CRM & Community Manager).

4. Discussion: Confronting Study 1 and Study 2 insights

The detailed aims of this Work Project were to understand a) how highly interested beauty consumers perceive and engage in co-creation, b) to explore Lancôme's current co-creation activities in Germany and how Lancôme managers perceive these as well as c) to explore whether Lancôme in Germany is perceived as a co-creating brand. The interviews revealed that the perspectives of consumers and managers on co-creation are different.

For the consumers from the sample, co-creation means to engage actively with a beauty brand and its brand representatives including beauty advisors or beauty influencers. The majority of the interviewed consumers showed interest in engaging in co-creation activities with beauty brands. This is in line with what Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a) state about the newly empowered consumer, who wants to be an active partner and not only a passive target. Consumers want to interact with brands in a two-way conversation and thereby co-create value. For instance, this can be seen in the example of the Bobbi Brown workshop. Bobbi Brown representatives actively involved consumers by asking for consumers' opinion and feedback. Another example is the case where Rituals relaunched a limited edition due to the feedback of consumers. In these cases, the interviewees felt that their opinion was valued and had an impact as they could see how their engagement led to changes. Grönroos definition of co-creation applies here: Value co-creation occurs during direct interactions exclusively between the brand, its representatives and the consumer in "a merged, coordinated, dialogical, and interactive process that creates value for the customer, and for the firm as well" (2012, p. 151).

However, for the Lancôme managers co-creation is something different than for the consumers. Co-creation for the managers means mainly being open to consumer feedback. From the interviews, it can be inferred that the majority of the managers have a misconception of co-creation. The consumer-centric approach, used at Lancôme, was mentioned in every interview, especially by the older managers, who believe that value co-creation equals the consumer-centric approach. Therefore, these managers have the feeling that Lancôme is already in an advanced stage of value co-creation. The managers emphasized that consumer-centricity is the base for everything they do at work. The consumer-centric approach at Lancôme includes meeting with the market research team before new product launches or communication campaigns to incorporate consumer insights, the launch of the CRM program or listening to consumers' feedback on social media. According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a), this describes the co-creation of experiences and not the co-creation of value. Some consumers engage with the brand; however, the engagement is company-driven and the focus is on connecting the customer to the company's offerings. The researchers argue that value co-creation is more than being open to consumer feedback or co-marketing. Value co-creation occurs when there is a dialogue between consumers and a company with the aim of joint creation of value and not about the company trying to please the consumer. For instance, Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004c) argue that CRM is a company-centric approach as customers represent passive targets and not active partners. Moreover, they further argue that traditional market research has the aim to get a better understanding of consumers or trends, but it looks at consumers as a target of a company's offerings.

Based on the manager's insights, it can be derived that Lancôme is currently between the *reactive* and *responsive* stage of Prahalad and Ramaswamy's (2004c) company evolution in co-creation. A company in the *reactive* stage has learned to react to the problems identified by consumers. Lancôme is reactive, for instance by adapting its Facebook campaign due to consumer feedback or by launching a local "Rates & Reviews" campaign due to German consumer feedback that Lancôme's communications were arrogant and distant. According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004c), a company in the *responsive* stage does not only react to consumer feedback, but also shows concern for consumer satisfaction through voluntary actions. Lancôme is moving to this stage, for instance by asking the "influencer squads" for their opinion when deciding which products or new colors to launch for the German market. However, the majority of the brand's co-creation activities are still mostly about being reactive, which is why Lancôme is in between the two stages. It is important to note that both stages are still entirely company-driven and thus Lancôme is only at a very early stage of co-creation.

The main objective of this study was to explore whether Lancôme is perceived as a co-creating brand in Germany. From the consumer interviews, it can be inferred that they currently do not see Lancôme in Germany as a co-creating brand. This might be due to the fact that consumers do not perceive sufficient value-in-use type of co-creation with the brand. One reason might be that consumers' brand knowledge about Lancôme is limited in the sense that the majority identifies the brand either with Julia Roberts and the perfume *La vie est belle* or as the brand their mother used. Merz et al. (2018) argue that brand knowledge is a central determinant of brand value co-creation and Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004b) state that without the necessary knowledge, a dialog between consumer and company is not possible. The interviewees did not mention other communication campaigns apart from the one with Julia Roberts. This may indicate that other Lancôme campaigns are not visible enough for German consumers, which may be a reason for the limited brand knowledge as they only see ads featuring Julia Roberts. As a result, this limited brand knowledge could be one determinant why consumers do not see sufficient value-in-use type of co-creation and thus do not perceive Lancôme in Germany as a co-creating brand.

However, consumers are starting to become more aware of Lancôme. Some interviewees mentioned that they saw beauty influencers cooperating with Lancôme and promoting their products. This positive word-of-mouth created awareness and desire for Lancôme and its products. Merz et al. (2018) argue that passion is also a key determinant of brand value co-creation. As Muñiz and Schau (2005) demonstrated, companies can profit from brand passion by extending their reach through positive word-of-mouth and by the fact that these brand enthusiasts are more likely to engage. Influencers and their followers share their consumption behavior and enrich mutual appreciation because they are passionate about a brand or a product (Merz et al., 2018). This can increase the perceived value-in-use type of co-creation.

Another insight is that Lancôme consumers are satisfied with the products and as it was shown in Study 1, consumers tend to be loyal to products when they are satisfied. This might explain Lancôme's success. However, they do not consider engaging with the brand. This might be due to insufficient brand connectedness with Lancôme. Merz et al. (2018) suggest that the connectedness among different stakeholder determines the degree of co-creation. More committed stakeholders are more likely to help co-creating brand value by engaging more with a brand. For instance, this can be seen with the example of the Bobbi Brown workshop where consumers were eager to actively engage with the brand and thus create brand value.

5. Recommendations for Lancôme

Based on the insights discussed above, some recommendations for Lancôme in Germany can be derived. First, managers need to understand that consumers perception of co-creation is different than their own and that Lancôme is only at an early stage of co-creation. Moreover, Lancôme needs to work on the visibility of its communication in Germany, so it becomes more visible for consumers and they start seeing Lancôme not only as their "mothers brand" or associate it exclusively with Julia Roberts. By strengthening brand knowledge, brand passion and brand connectedness, Lancôme might leverage on brand value co-creation to engage more with its consumers. Lancôme has several iconic products like *La vie est belle* or *Hypnôse,* which consumers are loyal to. However, the current communication is not visible enough to those German consumers who are, in general, willing to engage or co-create with beauty brands or does not motivate them enough. Thus, engaging consumers more via social media or by offering unique experiences is essential.

In a first step, Lancôme Germany should launch a local Instagram account as it was shown in Study 1 that the majority of consumers engage with their favorite beauty brands through Instagram. A local account would offer consumers a relevant platform to interact with the brand with content in German and thus be more approachable. The account could be used to feature user-generated content by the local ambassadresses or the influencers squads. Lancôme could also "repost" pictures by end consumers and share their "Happiness" moments, in line with the overall brand message. Looking at brands such as Bobbi Brown or Mac, which were perceived as more co-creating brands in Study 1, one can notice that they each have a local Instagram account to engage with their consumers. A local Instagram account would not only help extending brand knowledge of consumers and strengthening brand connectedness, but would also align with the overall strategy of Lancôme becoming an approachable luxury brand. Moreover, Lancôme should focus more on unique experiences, so the consumers perceive more value-in-use type of co-creation. For instance, Lancôme could introduce a "Happiness Club" in order to engage more with consumers and strengthen brand passion and brand connectedness. Lancôme could also organize workshops where brand enthusiasts can discuss new trends or "social media ready" events for people to share on Instagram and thus addressing consumers' perception of what co-creation is. Lastly, Lancôme should collect and manage consumers' or beauty advisors' feedback in a more systematic way. This would ensure that no information is overlooked and enable managers to react more effectively to feedback.

6. Limitations and future research

There are several limitations to this Work Project. First, the research only focused on the German market. Therefore, the insights cannot be expanded to other markets. Consumers from other countries might perceive or engage in co-creation activities differently. Furthermore, the interviewed managers are all from Lancôme in Germany and thus have to follow the overall brand strategy from the international headquarters, which is why the co-creation activities discussed here are mainly focused on communication campaigns.

Another limitation common to qualitative research is the risk of misrepresentation and difficulties in generalizing conclusions. Moreover, the limited sample size with only 30 consumers with 14 Lancôme consumers and 7 manager interviews makes the generalization of the conclusions difficult. Future research could expand this qualitative research to other markets and by extending the sample size. However, as there are only a limited number of managers who operate in each country, it will continue to be difficult to interview enough managers from only one brand. Moreover, instead of using a qualitative methodology, future research could focus on quantitative methods like questionnaires, which would make the generalizability of the results easier and more reliable by having a larger sample size.

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A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Master Degree in Management from NOVA – School of Business and Economics.

Is Lancôme perceived as a co-creating brand in Germany and how can the brand leverage on brand value co-creation to engage with consumers?

Appendices

LAURA RADITSCHEV

Student number: 3607

A Project carried out on the Master in Management Program, under the supervision of:

CATHERINE DA SILVEIRA

Lisbon, 23rd of May 2018

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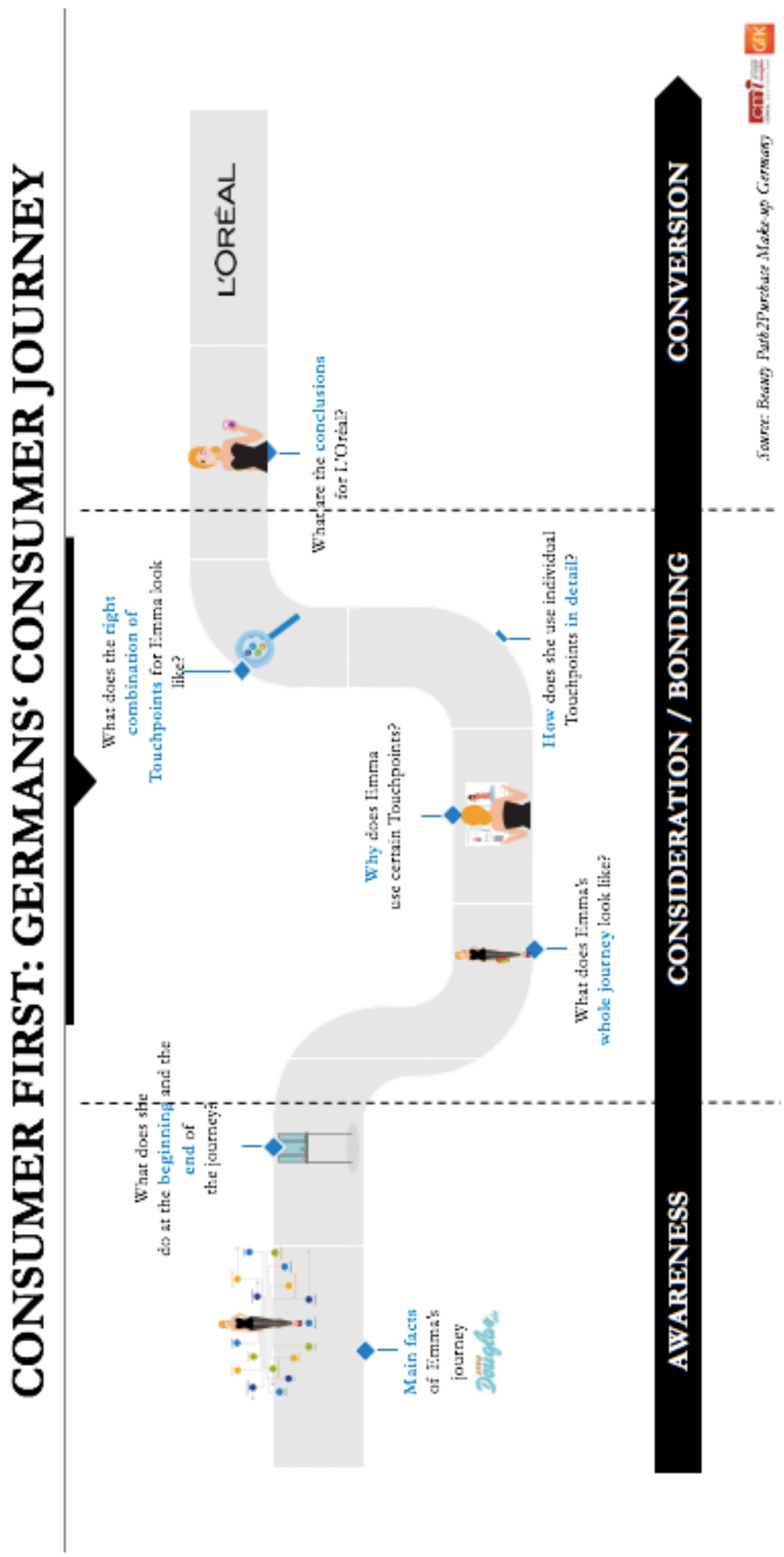
Appendix 1 – L’Oréal Path-to-Purchase



Appendix 2 – Pre-recruiting Questionnaire

Filter 1: Have you bought yourself a beauty product (online or offline) in the last six months?
If yes: go to filter 2
If no: stop interview
Filter 2: On a scale from 1 to 5 (1=not at all interested to 5=very interested), would you consider yourself interested in beauty?
If 4 or 5: go to filter 3
If 1 to 3: stop interview
Filter 3: From the following list of interactions with beauty brands, please select the one you already had:

- Social media interactions
    - Following a beauty brands' official account on Instagram
    - Following a beauty brands' official account on YouTube
    - Following a beauty brands' official account on Facebook
    - Commented a post of a beauty brand on Instagram
    - Commented a post of a beauty brand on YouTube
    - Commented a post of a beauty brand on Facebook
    - Posted a picture using a beauty product and tagged the brand
    - Shared an opinion/experience about a beauty brand or product on social media
    - Shared content generated by the beauty brand on Instagram, YouTube or Facebook
    - Watched a YouTube beauty tutorial and commented/shared it
    - Made a YouTube tutorial about a beauty brand/product
- Face-to-face interactions
    - Give feedback to a Beauty Advisor about the products
    - Share your opinion with your friends/family about a beauty brand or products
    - Recommended a beauty product to someone
- Online interactions
    - Wrote a letter or an email to a beauty brand company
    - Joined the official community of a beauty brand
    - Exchanged beauty tips in beauty forums/communities
    - Signed up for a newsletter of a beauty brand
    - Wrote a review about a beauty product online
- Other kind of interactions
    - Participated in a contest of a beauty brand
    - Participated in a crowdsourcing activity of a beauty brand
    - Participated in a contest of an influencer to win products of a specific beauty brand
    - Contacted an official ambassador (e.g. influencer) of a beauty brand to share opinions about the brand
    - Signed up for the loyalty program of a beauty brand and actively use it
    - Participated in an event of a beauty brand

Filter 3: Please name at least 3 beauty brands you had these interactions with.
Filter 4: Collect the respondents profile (age, nationality, education, occupation)

Appendix 3 – Interview Guide for Consumers

Warm-up Question

Good morning/ afternoon/ evening. My name is Laura Raditschev and I'm currently a student at NOVA School of Business and Economics. For my master thesis, I am conducting a research about beauty consumers interacting with beauty brands. For this purpose, I would like to interview you for approximately 45 to 60 minutes, by means of a non-structured interview, which means that I will ask you one question, to which there are not right or wrong answers and you are free to say whatever comes to your mind on the subject. For the purpose of analyzing our interviews later, I would like to record our conversation – would that be ok for you? The content of this interview will remain anonymous and you will not be further contacted once we conclude.

Initial Question

Please describe your most recent purchase experience of a beauty product! Which brand and product did you buy and why?

Topic 1: Purchase behavior

- Recent purchase experience
- Main drivers for purchase
- Location of purchase
- Brands and products that are purchased
- Decision making process (possible influences)

Topic 2: Consumption behavior

- Habits
- Beginning of consumption of product
- Main drivers for consumption
- Preference for specific brands

Topic 3: Engagement process with beauty brands

- Passive engagements
- Active engagements
- Drivers for engagement

Topic 4: Perception of engagement from the beauty brands

- Overall impression/perception of the beauty brand

Topic 5: Beauty influences

- Possible influences (influencers, brand ambassadors, beauty advisors, sales staff)

Conclusion and Greetings

Is there anything else that has not been covered that you think may be relevant?

Thank you for taking some time from your busy schedule today. Have a nice day!

Appendix 4 – Interview Guide for Lancôme Managers

Warm-up Question
Good morning/ afternoon/ evening. My name is Laura Raditschev and I'm currently a student at NOVA School of Business and Economics. For my master thesis, I am conducting a research about how Lancôme in Germany interacts with its consumers. For this purpose, I would like to interview you for approximately 45 to 60 minutes, by means of a non-structured interview, which means that I will ask you one question, to which there are not right or wrong answers and you are free to say whatever comes to your mind on the subject. For the purpose of analyzing our interviews later, I would like to record our conversation – would that be ok for you? The content of this interview will remain anonymous and you will not be further contacted once we conclude.

Initial Question
Could you please tell me about your background and your role at Lancôme since you joined the brand!

What was your perception of the brand identity when you started at Lancôme?

Topic 1: Engagement process with consumers

- Direct interactions
- Indirect interactions
  - Influencers
  - Beauty advisor
  - Sales staff
- Integration of consumers
  - Brand strategy
  - New product development
  - Promotional campaigns
  - Problem Identification
  - Involving the consumer in overcoming issues

Topic 2: Brand identity of Lancôme (covered with a question at the beginning and at the end of the interview)

- Perception when manager started his career at Lancôme
- Perception today

What is your perception of the brand identity of Lancôme today?

Conclusion and Greetings

Is there anything else that has not been covered that you think may be relevant?

Thank you for taking some time from your busy schedule today. Have a nice day!

Appendix 5 – Interview Codes Consumers

Interview Code	Brands used	Basic Information	Interview Details
Interviewee 1	Urban Decay Lancôme Mac	Age: 24 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Economics Student	Date: 26.03.2018 Duration: 41min
Interviewee 2	Vichy Skinceuticals Maybelline	Age: 27 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: District Manage	Date: 29.03.2018 Duration: 47min
Interviewee 3	Lancôme La Roche Posay Thalgo	Age: 27 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Team Assistant	Date: 30.03.2018 Duration: 48min
Interviewee 4	Nyx YSL Clinique	Age: 25 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Key Account Manager	Date: 30.03.2018 Duration: 42min
Interviewee 5	Mac Benefit Essie	Age: 24 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Management Student	Date: 31.03.2018 Duration: 31min
Interviewee 6	Dior Mac Urban Decay	Age: 25 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Research Assistant	Date: 31.03.2018 Duration: 52min
Interviewee 7	Biotherm Lancôme Kerastasse	Age: 21 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Consultant	Date: 02.04.2018 Duration: 46min
Interviewee 8	Lancôme Bobbi Brown Benefit	Age: 24 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Graphic Designer	Date: 03.04.2018 Duration: 47min
Interviewee 9	Dior YSL Lancôme	Age: 25 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: HR Assistant	Date: 04.04.2018 Duration: 40min
Interviewee 10	Mac Chanel Lancôme	Age: 25 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Flight attendant	Date: 04.04.2018 Duration: 44min
Interviewee 11	L’Oréal Paris Maybelline Nyx	Age: 24 Gender: Female Nationality: Russian Occupation: Economics student	Date: 04.04.2018 Duration: 38min

Interviewee 12	Dior Armani Laura Mercier	Age: 24 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Beauty Advisor	Date: 04.04.2018 Duration: 47min
Interviewee 13	Benefit L'Oréal Maybelline	Age: 19 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Management student	Date: 04.04.2018 Duration: 39min
Interviewee 14	Clinique Clarins Rituals	Age: 24 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Linguistic student	Date: 04.04.2018 Duration: 43min
Interviewee 15	Mac Chanel Lancôme	Age: 30 Gender: Female Nationality: German/Croatian Occupation: Marketing Assistant	Date: 05.04.2018 Duration: 41min
Interviewee 16	Chanel Dior Bobbi Brown	Age: 27 Gender: Female Nationality: Luxembourgish Occupation: IT Consultant	Date: 05.04.2018 Duration: 59min
Interviewee 17	Mac Bobbi Brown Helena Rubinstein	Age: 24 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Management student	Date: 05.04.2018 Duration: 49min
Interviewee 18	Lancôme Armani Bobbi Brown	Age: 23 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Research Assistant	Date: 08.04.2018 Duration: 61min
Interviewee 19	Roads By Terry Kiehl's	Age: 24 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Junior Product Manager	Date: 09.04.2018 Duration: 44min
Interviewee 20	Origins Too faced Mac	Age: 25 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Business Analyst	Date: 09.04.2018 Duration: 49min
Interviewee 21	Lancôme Bobbi Brown Dior	Age: 26 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Management student	Date: 16.04.2018 Duration: 46min
Interviewee 22	Lancôme Benefit Mac	Age: 25 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Economics student	Date: 16.04.2018 Duration: 43min
Interviewee 23	Lancôme Kiehl's Chloé	Age: 26 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Business student	Date: 16.04.2018 Duration: 42min

Interviewee 24	Mac Nyx Urban Decay	Age: 25 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Finance student	Date: 16.04.2018 Duration: 52min
Interviewee 25	Dior Lancôme Bobbi Brown	Age: 24 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Junior Product Manager	Date: 17.04.2018 Duration: 59min
Interviewee 26	Mac Bobbi Brown YSL	Age: 26 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Junior PR Manager	Date: 17.04.2018 Duration: 46min
Interviewee 27	Glossier Lancôme Benefit	Age: 25 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Marketing Assistant	Date: 17.04.2018 Duration: 55min
Interviewee 28	YSL Mac Lancôme	Age: 26 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Consultant	Date: 18.04.2018 Duration: 48min
Interviewee 29	Too faced Nyx Benefit	Age: 31 Gender: Female Nationality: Spanish Occupation: Consultant	Date: 18.04.2018 Duration: 33min
Interviewee 30	Nars Chanel L'Oréal Paris	Age: 27 Gender: Female Nationality: German Occupation: Recruiter	Date: 19.04.2018 Duration: 57min

Appendix 6 – Interview Codes Lancôme Managers

Interview Code	Job Title	Number of years at Lancôme	Interview Details
Manager 1	Business Leader	7 years	Date: 28.03.2018 Duration: 61min
Manager 2	PR Director	20 years	Date: 28.03. 2018 Duration:53 min
Manager 3	Product Manager Make-up	2 years	Date: 28.03. 2018 Duration: 57 min
Manager 4	Key Account Manager E-Commerce	8 years	Date: 27.04.2018 Duration: 47 min
Manager 5	Digital Manager	4 years	Date: 28.03.2018 Duration: 44min
Manager 6	CRM & Community Manager	2 years	Date: 04.05. 2018 Duration: 54 min
Manager 7	Senior Product Manager Skincare & Fragrance	3 years	Date: 29.03. 2018 Duration: 42 min